Educating the Soul in the World of Algorithms: Islamic Philosophy of Education as a Critique of Secular Digital Humanism

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically examine the dominance of algorithm-based education in the contemporary digital era and to reconstruct Islamic educational philosophy as a critical framework against secular digital humanism. The phenomenon addressed in this research is the increasing reliance on algorithms, artificial intelligence, and data-driven systems in education, which tend to reduce human beings to functional and measurable subjects while positioning education as a technical process oriented toward efficiency and performance. Such conditions marginalize the spiritual, moral, and existential dimensions of education. This study employs a qualitative philosophical approach using critical-conceptual analysis, drawing upon classical and contemporary sources in Islamic educational philosophy and digital education studies. The analysis focuses on the epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying secular digital humanism and contrasts them with key concepts in Islamic educational thought, such as tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul), ta'dīb (formation of adab), and the ideal of insān kāmil. The findings reveal that Islamic educational philosophy functions not merely as a complementary value system but as a fundamental philosophical critique that challenges the reductionist logic of algorithmic education. This study further demonstrates that Islamic philosophy reorients educational goals by subordinating technology and algorithms to transcendental purposes centered on soul formation and moral integrity. The main contribution of this research lies in offering a humanistic–transcendental framework that enriches global discussions on digital education by integrating spiritual and ethical dimensions that are largely absent from mainstream secular approaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology driven by artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and algorithms has radically changed the way humans learn, think, and form identities. In the context of education, this transformation is largely related to the use of algorithm-based learning platforms and automated grading systems. Research shows that AI can improve the learning experience through personalization and adaptation of content that suits the needs of each student (Akavova et al., 2023;

Göçen & AYDEMİR, 2020). The concept of education, which is often referred to as "algorithmic education", describes how education now focuses more on the process of transferring technical information and optimizing competencies. This is due to the dominance of efficiency logic in education which often reduces the ethical and spiritual dimensions in learning. Research by Qolamani and Mohammed (2023) states that the transformation of higher education has been influenced by digital tools and innovations such as vibrant learning management systems, data analytics, and AI that are transforming teaching practices and learning experiences (Qolamani & Mohammed, 2023).

A fundamental question arises about the purpose of education in this digital age: Does education still aim to form the whole human being, or is it simply to produce individuals who are adaptive to the needs of the market and digital systems? In this context, Li and Huang (2025) affirm that education must remain in conflict with human values and ethical considerations (Li & Huang, 2025). This leads to a need to develop an ethical framework in the application of AI in education, so that human values can be maintained (Holmes et al., 2021; Saxena & Bajotra, 2024). In response to the dominance of the secular humanism paradigm, Islamic philosophy of education offers an alternative view. In Islam, education is seen as a process of tazkiyat al-nafs, prioritizing the purification of the soul, the formation of morals, and the development of people who believe and are morally and spiritually responsible. (Azminah, 2020) emphasizes character values that must be maintained, which are the foundation of moral-based education (Azminah, 2020). This shows that while technology can facilitate the learning process, a holistic approach that includes spiritual and ethical growth is still needed.

The phenomenon of algorithm dominance in education brings a number of fundamental problems that must be addressed. First of all, there is a tendency to reduce the meaning of human beings to a set of data that can be predicted, measured, and controlled. This creates a situation where the learning process, which is supposed to be holistic and humanistic, is filtered through the lens of algorithms. As stated by Drigas and Mitsea (Drigas & Mitsea, 2020), algorithm-based data management and learning processes can affect students' preferences, ways of thinking, and values, thereby obscuring essential aspects of ethics and spirituality in education. The consequence of this is the emergence of a crisis of meaning, in which learners become technically skilled but lose moral and spiritual depth (Drigas & Mitsea, 2020). Second, digital education tends to reinforce the view of technocratic secular humanism, which prioritizes efficiency and quantitative output rather than the existential goals of education itself. In this context, education is often viewed from the perspective of measurable outcomes, such as test scores, rather than the development of students' character and moral values. As stated by Drigas and Mitsea (Drigas & Mitsea, 2020), the development of spiritual intelligence in education is essential to provide direction and meaning in life, which is necessary in the midst of the busyness and rapid change of times. Third, the phenomenon of digital alienation and the growing crisis of empathy shows that algorithm-based education often fails to meet the deepest needs of humans as sentient beings. (Usman et al., 2023) noted that education that aims to prepare students must prioritize cognitive, but also moral and spiritual aspects. This is where Islamic educational ethics and values should be able to play a more significant role, but challenges arise when many Muslim educational institutions adopt digital technologies without proper philosophical guidance. This risks making Islamic educational values only a normative embellishment, rather than a profound implementation in daily practice (Alya et al., 2024). To overcome existing problems, there needs to be a more integrative approach. The development of ethics in education, in accordance with the views of Magere et al. (Magere et al., 2024), and the development of spiritual intelligence as discussed by Niu et al. (Niu et al., 2021), can help maintain a balance between technical skills and humanitarian values. Education must be directed not only to produce academically competitive individuals but also individuals who are of good character, sensitive to the environment and others, and have high moral integrity.

This research is based on several main theoretical frameworks. First, the critique of secular humanism as developed in modern and postmodern philosophy, which highlights the tendency of Western humanism to disconnect human relations with transcendent dimensions. In the digital context, this critique extends through the concepts of digital humanism and algorithmic governance, which place technology as a new normative force in human life. Second, the philosophy of Islamic education is rooted in the concepts *of insān kāmil*, *tarbiyah*, *ta'līm*, and *ta'dīb*. The thoughts of figures such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasized that the goal of education

is not just the mastery of knowledge, but the formation of manners and awareness of man's position before God, nature, and fellow humans. Third, the theory of technology criticism that sees technology not as a neutral tool, but as a value system that forms the structure of human consciousness and social relations.

Recent studies show that the use of technology in education, including educational applications and online learning platforms, has a positive impact on the effectiveness of Islamic education leadership. Information technology can improve interaction between teachers and students, as well as increase the accessibility of educational resources (Suherman & Indra, 2023). However, behind this convenience, there are major challenges related to algorithmic bias that carry the risk of dehumanization in the learning process. This points to the need for a more inclusive approach that links philosophical thinking to current digital education practices. On the other hand, ethics in the use of technology is an important highlight. Islamic values provide guidance on the responsible use of technology, trying to prevent the dehumanization that can arise due to dependence on technology (Azka & Jenuri, 2024; Putri et al., 2024). Character education, including in the context of the use of social media and digital literacy, is the key to forming a generation that is not only technologically intelligent, but also has moral integrity (Dewi et al., 2021; Kusumastuti et al., 2024).

The philosophy of Islamic education emphasizes the importance of educating individuals to function as servants of Allah and caliphs, which includes moral and character development (Rukmini et al., 2024). Through research that explores the implementation of Islamic values in education, it was found that physical education and sports, for example, can be an effective means of shaping the character of Ulul Albab (Hasnah et al., 2023). This shows that education focuses not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on the spiritual and moral dimensions, which seems to contradict the approach of digital humanism that often ignores these values. Furthermore, the importance of integrating Islamic values in formal education can be a criticism of secular digital humanism. Research on ethics and values contained in Islamic education shows that they are relevant to face the challenges of digital culture that is often individualistic and materialistic (Rahmatullah & Kamal, 2023). In this context, Islamic philosophy of education is able to provide a normative framework that can align technology with a more utopian educational goal.

Several studies show that a clear ethical and policy framework is indispensable for integrating digital technology in Islamic education (Astra et al., 2024), (Mashudi & Hilman, 2024). For example, Astra et al. state that Islamic educational institutions must develop policies that emphasize the use of digital tools in accordance with Islamic ethical values, so that quality education can be maintained (Astra et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Mashudi and Hilman noted the importance of a hybrid approach that combines digital resources with reflective practices to improve students' spiritual understanding (Mashudi & Hilman, 2024). This approach suggests that in order to respond to digital humanism, Islamic education requires a framework that is not only a normative alternative, but also a basis for critiquing the dominance of technology in education. Research by Nadifa and Ambarwati shows that Islamic education needs to adapt to technological developments, especially in the era of Society 5.0, where education must follow the stages of destructive thinking and build creative thinking among students (Nadifa & Ambarwati, 2024). This is in line with the view that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can strengthen students' character through the use of appropriate digital media (Kharismatunisa, 2023). However, existing challenges, such as school readiness and teacher competence in the digital world must be overcome (Nadifa & Ambarwati, 2024), (Beisenbayev & Almukhametov, 2024). There is also special attention to the need for reform in teaching methods to ensure that the quality of Islamic education is maintained in the midst of digitalization (Adiyono et al., 2024; Beisenbayev & Almukhametov, 2024).

The dominance of algorithms in modern education has the potential to disrupt the essence of Islamic educational values. Judijanto and Halim show that the transformation of education in the digital context must be examined from an intellectual and ethical perspective (Judijanto & Halim, 2024). Using bibliometric analysis, they describe how Islamic education should transform and can be an alternative in academic discourse related to educational technology (Judijanto & Halim, 2024). On the other hand, Gupta emphasizes the importance of critical engagement in the context of digital education by providing students with the tools to deeply understand how algorithms affect their choices (Gupta,

2023). This is an important step in preparing students to critique and understand their context more broadly.

The main novelty of this research lies in the effort to reposition the philosophy of Islamic education not just as a normative framework or complementary value system, but as a fundamental philosophical critique of the secular digital humanism that dominates contemporary educational practices. So far, Islamic philosophy of education has often been positioned defensively as a moral or ethical response to modernity without being developed as an instrument of epistemological and ontological criticism of the basic assumptions of technology-based education. This research goes beyond this approach by placing the philosophy of Islamic education as a critical paradigm that is able to dismantle the ideological foundations of modern digital education. In mainstream discourse, secular digital humanism views technology and algorithms as neutral instruments that can increase the efficiency, objectivity, and personalization of learning. However, this study shows that algorithms actually contain certain value and logic content, especially utilitarian logic, performativity, and data optimization, which implicitly shape the way humans understand themselves, knowledge, and educational goals. The novelty of this research lies in the affirmation that Islamic philosophy of education has a strong conceptual tool to criticize the reduction of human beings into *datafied subjects* and education into mere measurable technical processes.

Furthermore, this research offers a new perspective that algorithms and digital technologies should be subordinated to higher educational goals, not the other way around. In many digital education practices, educational goals are often tailored to what technological capabilities algorithms can measure, analyze, and predict. This research reverses this logic by asserting that the purpose of education, in the Islamic perspective, is teleological and transcendental, namely the formation of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), the cultivation of manners (*ta'dīb*), and the development of human beings as moral beings and responsible before God, fellow humans, and nature. Another novelty lies in the integration of key concepts of Islamic educational philosophy such as *insān kāmil*, adab, and the unity of knowledge and charity into the critique of algorithmic culture. Thus, digital technology is not rejected a priori, but is philosophically reconstructed to function as a means of education that supports human inner growth. This approach differs significantly from the literature that tends to see spirituality only as an additional dimension in digital education, rather than as a key guiding principle. The important contribution of this research also lies in the enrichment of digital educational discourse through a transcendental approach that has been relatively marginalized in mainstream literature dominated by secular Western perspectives. By bringing the philosophy of Islamic education into a critical dialogue with the study of digital humanism and technological criticism, this research opens up a new epistemic space that allows the formulation of a more humane, meaningful, and soul-oriented digital education model, rather than just technological prowess. Thus, the novelty of this research is not only thematic, but also paradigmatic: this research shifts the perspective on the relationship between education, technology, and humans, and affirms the relevance of Islamic educational philosophy as a source of criticism and educational transformation in the algorithmic era.

This research aims to examine the philosophical foundations of algorithm-based education by critically examining the assumptions underlying secular digital humanism and exploring alternative thinking offered by Islamic philosophy of education. In particular, this study questions how secular digital humanism constructs human subjects, knowledge, and educational goals in algorithm-based learning systems that emphasize efficiency, scalability, and data optimization. Furthermore, this study examines how Islamic philosophy of education views human nature, educational goals, and the position of technology, especially in relation to the development of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the formation of adab. Departing from these two frameworks, this study analyzes the extent to which Islamic educational philosophy can function as a philosophical critique both epistemologically and ontological to secular digital humanism. In the end, this study examines the implications of this criticism for the reconstruction of education in the algorithmic era so that it remains oriented to human development in a complete and meaningful way.

This research aims to critically analyze the secular digital humanism that underlies algorithm-based modern educational practices and construct the philosophy of Islamic education as an alternative framework oriented towards the development of the soul and the formation of human manners. The

focus of the research is directed at the disclosure of philosophical assumptions that reduce education to a technical process and human beings into measurable subjects, while reaffirming the vision of Islamic education that views human beings as spiritual physical beings with existential goals that go beyond efficiency and performivity. The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need for an educational paradigm that is not only adaptive to the development of digital technology, but also able to maintain human dignity, the meaning of education, and transcendental orientation in the midst of the dominance of algorithms. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the development of contemporary Islamic educational philosophy in critical dialogue with the study of digital humanism, while practically being a conceptual reference for policy formulation and educational design in the digital age.

2. METHODS

This research focuses on the study of the results of the interaction between secular digital humanism and modern education through philosophical-critical and conceptual-analytical approaches. The research design taken provides space for a sharp analysis of the epistemological, ontological, and axiological constructions that shape mindsets and practices in the context of education. Thus, it is hoped that this research will not only produce understanding, but also criticism of current educational instruments.

Secular digital humanism is often seen as the underlying framework for education in the digital age. This form of education seeks to eliminate religious values from the learning process, resulting in a more secular approach (Oktarini et al., 2025). However, criticism of this approach is very important to raise, especially from the perspective of Islamic education which can provide an alternative view. The philosophy of Islamic education, based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasizes the importance of integration between science and spirituality, creating an education system that is not only oriented to academic results, but also to character formation (Romli et al., 2023; Saputra et al., 2023). Furthermore, an epistemological analysis of the rise of spirituality-oriented Islamic education can make a significant contribution to redefining education in the digital age. Nasr, in his works, elaborates on the concept of sacred knowledge that provides a framework for strengthening spirituality in education (Mubarok et al., 2025). Therefore, exploring the religious side in the development of educational curriculum in the digital era is essential.

Technological advances in education are often seen as a neutral system. However, this study emphasizes the fact that educational technology and algorithms actually shape the way humans understand education and their own identities (Auladi & Muwahid, 2025). Philosophical-critical design allows researchers to look beyond just the technical implementation of education, but rather to understand how the structure of meaning and power is manifested in educational practice. This is in line with Nasr's criticism of modernity which tends to reduce spiritual and moral values in education (Maulud & Syaifuddin, 2025).

The importance of axiological analysis in this study is more relevant to highlight how existing values can affect the form and content of education. The axiological framework in Islamic education can provide guidance in setting priorities for the values that must be taught, both in local and global contexts (Mujiburrohman & Hadiwijaya, 2025; Oktarini et al., 2025). By understanding this relationship, it is hoped that education can be proactive in facing the challenges posed by the digital era, especially in maintaining the integrity of spiritual values.

Research data is collected through library research by examining relevant primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include classical and contemporary works of Islamic educational philosophy such as the thought of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas who discuss the nature of man, the purpose of education, and the concept of adab. Meanwhile, secondary sources include cutting-edge literature on digital humanism, algorithm-based education, technological ethics, and criticism of artificial intelligence in education. The literature is obtained from reputable international journals, academic books, and relevant scientific publications to ensure the validity and depth of the analysis.

Data analysis is carried out through philosophical-hermeneutic analysis and critical-conceptual analysis. Hermeneutic analysis is used to interpret Islamic educational philosophy texts in a contextual and systematic manner, so that concepts such as *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *ta'dīb*, and *insān kāmil* can be understood

for their relevance in the context of contemporary digital education. Furthermore, critical-conceptual analysis is used to identify and evaluate the basic assumptions of secular digital humanism, particularly in terms of views on people, knowledge, and educational goals. Through a critical dialogue between the two frameworks, this research produces a conceptual synthesis that is reflective and transformative.

The methodological framework of this research is arranged in four main stages. First, identification and conceptual mapping of the characteristics of secular digital humanism in algorithm-based education. Second, a philosophical analysis of the principles of Islamic educational philosophy related to human nature, the purpose of education, and the relationship between humans and technology. Third, a critical and comparative dialogue between the two frameworks to uncover points of tension and relevant philosophical criticism. Fourth, conceptual reconstruction, namely the formulation of the implications of Islamic educational philosophy for the development of education in the algorithm era. This framework ensures that research runs systematically, coherently, and oriented towards clear theoretical contributions.
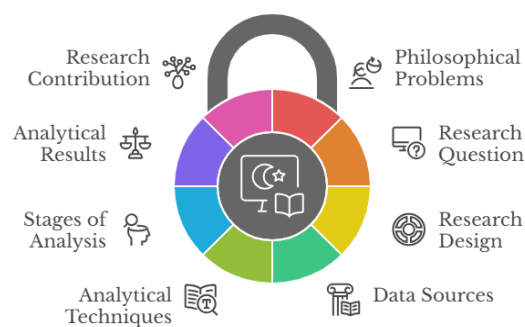
Frame Of Mind

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Algorithm-Based Education in the Framework of Secular Digital Humanism: A Conceptual Analysis

Algorithm-based education in the current context is increasingly dominant, adopting a secular approach to digital humanism. Within this framework, humans are considered rational-instrumental subjects whose behavior can be monitored and optimized using algorithmic systems. This is in line with the emphasis that modern educational technology is not neutral, but rather has epistemological assumptions that influence our understanding of knowledge and education. Datafication, as a process by which data is transformed into an educational commodity, emphasizes that education takes place in an increasingly technical and measurable context (Timotheou et al., 2022); .

According to Timotheou et al., the digitization of education affects learning outcomes by providing information about student outcomes, teacher quality, and school performance, which encourages measurable data-driven practices (Timotheou et al., 2022). The pressure to improve the quality of education and productivity is increasingly leading to digitalization that is changing the way we understand knowledge, making it fragmented information. In this context, criticism of digital humanism focuses on the view that technology can transform humans into defined data in a controlled system (Helsa, 2024). In research on critical digital pedagogy, Aguilera and Salazar state that the development of digital technology has created a platform where education must consider the social and political impacts of its application (Aguilera & Salazar, 2023). Education should not only see students as manageable and optimized entities, but should ultimately emphasize aspects of human involvement as whole individuals with diverse tendencies and values. This is important so that technology does not reduce the meaning of learning to just a technical process.

Meanwhile, critical thinking that includes the philosophy of technology suggests that the integration of technology in education should encourage dialogue and understanding, not just accept raw information as knowledge (Helsa, 2024). Thus, algorithm-based education must not only consider

efficiency but also relevance and human connection in the teaching and learning process. In the context of datafication, there is an urgent need to consider how data is used and controlled in education. Critical attitudes towards the use of data in education are particularly relevant, as the practice reflects how students and education are viewed in the larger system (Aguilera & Salazar, 2023; Helsa, 2024).

Research on the transformation of humanism in the context of current education shows how classical secular humanism has adapted to the development of digital technology. Modern secular humanism places humans at the center of autonomous rationality, while in the digital age, a shift has occurred towards algorithmic humanism. In this case, human autonomy is not only protected but also often mediated by technological systems that emphasize the logic of efficiency and perperitivity. The concept of algorithmic humanism shows that although humans remain as subjects in charge, individual independence is empowered and at the same time limited by algorithms that govern digital interactions. As revealed by Jacobus et al., modern education has begun to be oriented to adapt individuals to the demands of an increasingly competitive market (Jacobus et al., 2024). This creates conditions in which the focus of education is no longer on the formation of wisdom in classical secular humanism, but on producing individuals who can adapt quickly to technological and social changes.

In this context, education takes on a new form that is more utilitarian. For example, Mokalu et al. argue the relevance of learning theory and educational technology as a unit that underlies the learning process in a digital context (Mokalu et al., 2022). This emphasis suggests that the modern education system places more emphasis on measurable outcomes, adaptability, and individual responsibility for learning effectiveness and efficiency. On a more practical level, research conducted by Muliadi and Elmunsyah indicates that the use of e-learning and user interest have an effect on mastery of learning technology in the post-pandemic period (Muliadi & Elmunsyah, 2024). This further emphasizes that today's education must be oriented towards market and technological needs, leaving aside more profound humanistic aspects, such as character development and integrity values.

In the study of Islamic education, there is a fundamental paradigmatic difference between new findings in education and more traditional Islamic educational philosophies. The philosophy of Islamic education is elaborated with concepts such as insān kāmil (perfect human being), tazkiyat al-nafs (the development of the soul), and ta'dīb (character education) that emphasize the holistic development of the individual. Islamic education should not only focus on mastering technical competencies, but also on the integration of knowledge, charity, and manners in creating good character (El-Yunusi et al., 2023; Scott, 2024).

Key Points in the Philosophy of Islamic Education

1. Teleological and Transcendental: Education in the Islamic view is geared towards fulfilling goals that go beyond mere practical or technical functions. Based on the definition of insān kāmil, education aims to develop human beings who are balanced between physical and spiritual aspects, thus forming a complete personality (Haron et al., 2020; Susilo et al., 2022).

2. Integration of Science and Ethics: The application of technology in education should not dominate the learning process, but must be in line with the goal of character education that emphasizes morals and moral values taught in the context of religion. Islamic education positions character as a result of a deep understanding of moral and spiritual values that need to be applied in daily life (Fuadhah, 2024; Mubarok et al., 2025)

3. Character in the Context of Education: Character education in the philosophy of Islamic education is also integrated with the teaching of faith and fiqh, so that students can live their lives according to consistent Islamic values. Both character and morality are very important aspects of the educational process (El-Yunusi et al., 2023; Susilo et al., 2022).

In the digital era, new challenges have arisen related to the integration of technology in education. Research such as the one conducted by Timotheou et al. shows that to be able to effectively adopt technology in education, it is necessary to develop digital infrastructure and provide quality content. However, this is often contrary to the view of Islamic educational philosophy that emphasizes moral and spiritual values as a reference in education (Timotheou et al., 2022; Velly et al., 2025).

1. Resistance to Technological Autocracy: The use of technology in the context of education must be done with care so as not to neglect the purpose of character formation. Technology-focused

education may lead to the abandonment of the core values expected in Islamic education (Velly et al., 2025).

2. Maintaining Character Education Principles: A more ethical and balanced approach needs to be formulated to combine technology-based learning with character education. This demands pedagogical adjustments that encourage teachers to apply methods that are in accordance with the philosophy of Islamic education and meet the needs of today's digital generation (Mubarok et al., 2025).

The tension that arises between algorithm-based education and Islamic educational philosophy reflects profound differences, not only in method, but also in the ontological and epistemological underpinnings underlying both. While algorithm-based education assumes that educational progress is synonymous with the use and optimization of technology, Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes that progress is measured by the quality of the soul, manners, and individual responsibility (Nuruliana et al., 2025; Rahman, 2025). In the view of Islamic education, education serves not only for the transfer of knowledge, but also for shaping character and morality, so that there is a clear separation between a more mechanistic technology-based approach and a more spiritual approach in education (Hasanah et al., 2025; Nuruliana et al., 2025; Rahman, 2025).

In the era of Society 5.0, challenges arise in integrating the use of technology in Islamic education without sacrificing the core values taught by the Qur'an and Hadith. Research shows that the integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital platforms can increase the effectiveness of education, but its implementation must be sensitive to the context of Islamic values (Sari, 2025; Ulum et al., 2025). For example, the use of information technology in human resource management in Islamic educational institutions can increase transparency and professionalism, but it must still be based on moral principles that are in accordance with Islamic teachings (Suryana, 2025; Ulum et al., 2025). Thus, the incompatibility between the basic assumptions about the nature of the human being in the two approaches is becoming increasingly apparent.

Islamic philosophy of education serves as a relevant theoretical framework for critiquing and balancing the dominance of secular digital humanism in contemporary education. Research states that secular approaches often fail to accommodate the important spiritual and ethical dimensions of learning (Hasyim & Nashrullah, 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025). By emphasizing character development and social responsibility, Islamic education offers a holistic alternative that reminds us of the importance of education that not only targets academic prowess but also moral development (Hasanah et al., 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025; Rahman, 2025). This emphasis becomes important in today's global context, where technology is often considered a key driver of progress without considering its impact on human values (Hermawati & Fofied, 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025).

3.2 Human Subject Reduction in Algorithmic Education: Epistemological and Ontological Critiques

The conceptual findings of this study show that algorithm-based education operates within the framework of secular digital humanism that systematically reduces the essence of the human being. In this paradigm, learners are understood primarily as functional subjects that can be measured, predicted, and optimized through data, while the dimensions of the soul, meaning, and existential orientation tend to be marginalized. Education is no longer understood as a process of forming a whole human being, but rather as a technical mechanism to produce standardized performance, efficiency, and output. This reduction shows a fundamental ontological problem, namely the narrowing of human meaning from a physical-spiritual being to a statistical and algorithmic entity.

From an epistemological perspective, algorithmic education is also characterized by a shift in the meaning of knowledge. Knowledge is reduced to scalable, fragmented, and computationally processable information. In this context, the value of truth is no longer determined by depth of meaning or ethical relevance, but rather by data visibility, predictive accuracy, and processing speed. This condition contributes to what can be called a crisis of meaning in digital education, in which the learning process loses its transcendental orientation and is trapped in the logic of performativity. As a result, education has the potential to perpetuate the alienation of students from themselves and from the nobler educational goals (Novita, 2023; Taufiki, 2025).

These findings affirm the criticism of contemporary critical education thinkers, but this study goes further by showing that the problem is not just a question of the ethics of the use of technology,

but stems from the ontological and epistemological assumptions of secular digital humanism itself. Thus, criticism of algorithmic education is not enough to be carried out through technical regulations or procedural policies, but requires philosophical criticism that targets the foundations of the digital education paradigm.

3.3 The Philosophy of Islamic Education as a Transcendental Critique of Secular Digital Humanism

In this context, the philosophy of Islamic education is constructed in this study not as a complementary normative value system, but as a transcendental critique of secular digital humanism. In contrast to the approach to technological ethics which is generally corrective and instrumental, Islamic philosophy of education fundamentally questions how people, knowledge, and educational goals are understood in an algorithm-based education system. This position places the philosophy of Islamic education as a critical framework that is able to deconstruct the basic assumptions of modern digital education.

Al-Ghazali's thought on *tazkiyat al-qalb* offers a significant epistemological critique of the reduction of knowledge to information. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, *qalb* is the center of human epistemic and moral consciousness that determines the quality of knowledge and the orientation of life. The reconstruction of this concept in the digital context confirms that digital literacy is not sufficiently understood as a technical ability to sort information, but as the ability of qalb to distinguish truth, benefits, and values in the midst of a flood of digital data (Fahrudin et al., 2024) (Sodikin & Siswati, 2024). Thus, the philosophy of Islamic education shifts the focus of criticism from the question of "how technology is used" to a more fundamental question: "what kind of human being does education want to form".

Meanwhile, the thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah reinforces the pragmatic dimension of this transcendental critique. The concept *of mujāhadah* is reconstructed as *digital resilience*, which is the ability of educated subjects to resist impulsive impulses produced by algorithmic logic, such as gadget addiction and *doomscrolling* (Prasetia et al., 2022) (Sodikin & Siswati, 2024). The concept *of muraqabah* serves as an ontological critique of digital anonymity by instilling an awareness of Divine oversight as an internal control mechanism that goes beyond technology-based external oversight (Harianti et al., 2022) (Susanty & Hawadi, 2020). The *muhasabah* emphasizes the importance of self-reflection as a moral audit of digital activities that integrate spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions (Sodikin & Siswati, 2024)

The main novelty of this section lies in the positioning of Islamic educational philosophy as an epistemological and ontological critique of secular digital humanism, not just as a discourse on the Islamization of educational technology. Classical Islamic concepts are presented as theoretical tools that have critical power to dialogue with contemporary global education problems.

3.4 Reconstructing the Purpose of Education in the Age of Algorithms: From Efficiency to Fostering Soul and Manners

Based on this criticism, this study emphasizes the need to reconstruct educational goals in the algorithm era. Education cannot be constantly guided by the logic of efficiency, optimization, and performativity alone, because this orientation risks obscuring the true purpose of education. Within the framework of Islamic education philosophy, the purpose of education is teleological and transcendental, namely the development of the soul and the formation of human manners. Therefore, technology and algorithms should be positioned as means that are subject to the goals of education, not as determinants of the direction of education itself.

This reconstruction demands a paradigm shift from *education for performance* to *education for being*. Education is understood as the process of forming human beings who are aware of their moral and spiritual responsibilities, not just individuals who are adaptive to technological systems. In this perspective, adab is not understood as an external norm, but rather as an inner disposition formed through the process of *tazkiyah*, *mujāhadah*, and continuous reflection. The reconstruction of educational goals also serves as a critique of the market-driven tendency of education to make education an instrument of economic and technological interests.
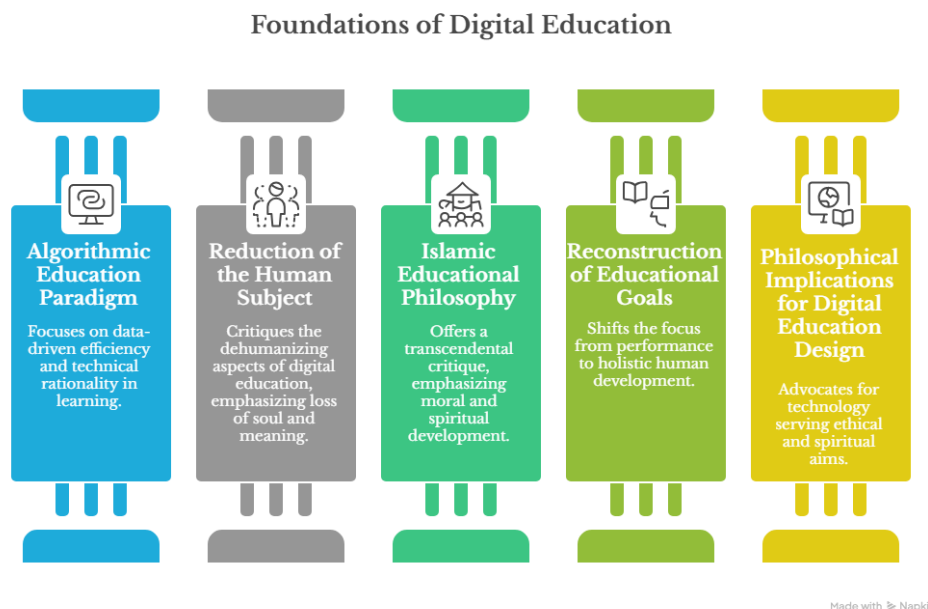
Thus, Islamic education offers an alternative horizon to global digital education, namely education that is oriented towards meaning, responsibility, and humanity. This orientation does not reject technology, but subjects it to the goal of higher education and meaning.

3.5 Philosophical Implications for Digital Education Design: Towards a Humanist-Transcendental Education

The philosophical implications of these findings confirm that the design of digital education needs to depart from a more complete understanding of humans. Humanist-transcendental digital education demands the integration of spiritual, ethical, and psychological dimensions into technology-based learning systems. In this context, the role of educators cannot be reduced to technical facilitators, but rather as moral and spiritual agents who guide learners in navigating the algorithmic world.

Furthermore, digital education needs to be designed as a space for awareness formation, not just a space for content distribution. The concepts of *muraqabah* and *muhasabah* can be ethical principles in the design of digital pedagogy, so that online activities are not understood as a value-free space, but as part of human moral responsibility. This approach is in line with the findings that the integration of spiritual values and self-reflection contributes to strengthening students' self-regulation and psychological resilience (Harianti et al., 2022); (Rosmalina et al., 2023).

Thus, this section does not repeat the conclusion, but serves as a conceptual bridge to the final affirmation that soul education in the age of algorithms requires an integrative transformative paradigm. The philosophy of Islamic education, through its transcendental critique, makes a significant contribution to the development of digital education that is more humane, meaningful, and soul-forming.

Foundations of Digital Education

Algorithmic Education Paradigm	Reduction of the Human Subject	Islamic Educational Philosophy	Reconstruction of Educational Goals	Philosophical Implications for Digital Education Design
Focuses on data-driven efficiency and technical rationality in learning.	Critiques the dehumanizing aspects of digital education, emphasizing loss of soul and meaning.	Offers a transcendental critique, emphasizing moral and spiritual development.	Shifts the focus from performance to holistic human development.	Advocates for technology serving ethical and spiritual aims.

Made with Napkin

Frame Of Mind

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the dominance of algorithm-based education in the contemporary context is rooted in the paradigm of secular digital humanism that epistemologically and ontological reduces the essence of human beings and educational goals. Within this framework, humans tend to be understood as functional and measurable subjects, while education is reduced to a technical process oriented towards efficiency, performivity, and data optimization. The findings of the study show that this reduction results in the marginalization of the dimensions of the soul, meaning, and transcendental orientation of education. As a critical response, Islamic educational philosophy is constructed not just as a normative value system, but as a fundamental philosophical critique of secular digital humanism. Through key concepts such as *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *ta'dīb*, and *insān kāmil*, Islamic educational philosophy offers a reconstruction of educational goals that places technology and algorithms as means of subordinating the development of the soul and the formation of human manners. Thus, this study emphasizes the relevance of Islamic education philosophy in enriching the global digital education discourse through a more humane and meaningful transcendental approach.

Based on these findings, further research is recommended to develop empirical and contextual studies to test how the principles of Islamic education philosophy can be implemented concretely in digital education practices, both at the level of curriculum, pedagogy, and learning technology design. In addition, a comparative study across traditions of thought for example between Islamic philosophy of education and non-Western approaches to critical humanism needs to be carried out to expand the global dialogue on humanitarian-oriented digital education. Future research is also important to explore the role of educators as moral and spiritual agents in the algorithm-based educational ecosystem, so that the philosophical critiques offered do not stop at the conceptual level, but contribute to the transformation of educational policies and practices in the digital age.

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